

**Silver Spring
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
July 14, 2011**

2c

Abbreviations:

DDOT = District Dept. of Transportation
DHCA = Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs
HIA = High Incident Area
JARC = Jobs Access Reverse Commute
MCDOT = Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation
M-NCPPC = Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
MSHA = Maryland State Highway Administration
MWCOC = Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
NOAA = National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
TERM = Transportation Emissions Reduction Measure
WABA = Washington Area Bicyclist Association

Items 1, 2 & 3 Introductions /Chair's Comments: Members introduced themselves. Approval of the April and June minutes was tabled for lack of quorum.

Andrew Wexler voiced his concerns about the rate hike of the Fenton Street Craft Market and asked if the Committee would like to support the vendors by writing a letter opposing the rate increase. He believes keeping market fees low promotes the TMD mission by making the community more attractive to businesses and residents promoting walkability in the area.

The proposed County increase would raise the \$48 rate to \$1,200. The cost is paid by the organizer to the County for usage of the space, which in turn will be passed on to the vendors.

Rukiyat Gilbert said included in the letter should be a condition to lock in a lower market rate because she believes it is there for the community's benefit.

Sande Brecher said in order to comment about the market it must make points regarding the mission of the Committee. **Mr. Wexler** said he believes the market will make the CBD area more attractive to people and business to locate to Silver Spring area. **Mr. Carlson** informed the Committee that there was currently no quorum available and, since this issue will be resolved by the next meeting, it is a moot point.

Mr. Wexler asked members to network with others in an effort to bring new members to the Committee. **Mr. Carlson** said there are currently two large employer vacancies. He and **Mr. Wexler** are working on a flyer to send to prospective businesses to fill the slots.

Ms. Gilbert's asked if the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) could join the Committee. **Ms. Brecher** explained that the Committee is partly funded by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC). MWCOC's Transportation Emissions Reduction

Measures (TERM) analysis is used primarily for evaluating private industry programs. She is reluctant to have federal employees sit on the Committee, but welcomes them to attend meetings as they could offer helpful information even though their needs are different from the private sector.

Michael Meszaros said he would ask the Silver Spring Chamber if it could recommend businesses for the open positions.

Mr. Meszaros commented that traffic was backed up on Georgia Avenue after Spring Street due to the Urban District's garbage truck picking up trash. He asked if the Committee could ask them to reroute the trash pick up to the outer bounds during rush hour and focus on the main arteries during off peak hours. **Mr. Carlson** will contact **Yvette Freeman**, the Urban District supervisor, about **Mr. Meszaros'** concerns.

Item 4 - Pedestrian Safety Update: **Jeff Duncel** commented that **William Haynes** has made major improvements in the County's High Incident Areas (HIAs) since the last update.

Mr. Haynes updated the Committee on pedestrian safety on Georgia Avenue. The Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA), Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) and the County Dept. of Transportation (MCDOT) are working together to make improvements which come from 21 of the pedestrian safety recommendations:

- Putting in crossing light countdown signals
- Curb extensions to shorten crossing time
- Brick paving sidewalks

MSHA and DHCA are using some of MCDOT audit recommendations; because of this, MCDOT is providing funding for some of the improvements.

MSHA improvements will be done by November, and DHCA improvements will start in the fall. The improvements will be made along Georgia Avenue between Wayne and Sligo Avenues.

Mr. Haynes said that when his team took the audit to MSHA to publish, they were informed that MSHA does not release its audits to the public. The audit was repackaged to meet state approval, then released. Next week the audit will be available on the MCDOT website. **Mr. Duncel** will send the link to **Mr. Carlson** to distribute. A small press release will be done for the various stakeholders associated with the audit.

The Four Corners area (intersection of US 29/Colesville Rd. & MD 193/University Blvd.) is another HIA that was studied. The area had many right of way issues. To target these issues, an educational outreach program is being developed with Montgomery Blair High School to encourage pedestrian safety. **Mr. Duncel** said that there is a contract in place which provides the resources to implement the program. Surveys were done for the Piney Branch HIA as a model; MCDOT distributed surveys to pedestrians in the Four Corners area, which consisted mostly of Blair students.

One of the ideas for the Four Corners pedestrian safety project is placing markers by crosswalks directing people where to walk. CASA de Maryland will intercept pedestrians who ignore the

markers in an effort to enforce to project initiatives. Placement of the markers must first be approved by MSHA.

In response to **Mr. Meszaros** comments regarding placing pedestrian crossings under street lights, **Mr. Dunckel** said improving lighting conditions is part of his team's mission. They evaluate where to place crosswalks not only during the day but at night as well.

The main challenge, **Mr. Dunckel** said, is stopping mid-block crossings by pedestrians. His team will be issuing tickets to violators - not only jaywalkers but drivers as well who disregard traffic laws. Although there is a consensus among officers not to issue tickets to pedestrians, the head of the Traffic Division, **Capt. Thomas Didone** is seeking to change that view. **Sgt. Harmon** is a supporter of **Capt. Didone's** efforts.

Mr. Dunckel said that the enforcement efforts taking place in Four Corners will also be done in the Piney Branch area and eventually Georgia Avenue. He said the reason why there has not been any educational activity on Georgia Ave. is because there is construction in the area for the next six to nine months; then they will continue with the surveys and educational plan. The overall strategy in reducing HIAs is to rely on the three prong approach of engineering, education and enforcement in an effort that is coordinated and targeted.

In response to a question from **Mr. Carlson** what is currently considered 'state of the art' in crosswalks, **Mr. Haynes** explained traffic signals have countdown timers, audible messages and detectable surfaces on curbs and ramps, in addition to the pavement markings and lighting already utilized. Other features include crossings with hazard beacon systems, which are pedestrian-triggered flashing lights to alert approaching vehicles.

Mr. Haynes explained that since the City of Rockville, unlike the rest of the County, maintains its own roads, and has offered a good model for pedestrian safety initiatives. He also explained that the State will not allow safety upgrades to a single intersection unless all intersections in the area are upgraded as well.

For a time Montgomery County had one of the few safety audit programs in the country; and now that the State is also conducting safety audits, efforts are doubled which will have a greater impact on pedestrian safety. **Mr. Haynes** said the MSHA has become a partner with MCDOT regarding road upgrades, by reviewing audit reports and participating in audit teams.

Ms. Brecher asked if MSHA's participation has anything to do with the agency receiving federal funding. **Mr. Haynes** said he believes their participation is based on the County being able to provide some funding to projects.

In response to **Mr. Wexler's** inquiry regarding Title III grant funding, **Mr. Haynes** said that it was a possibility; however, it would not a first choice because of the bureaucracy common with grant funding. **Mr. Dunckel** added that problems associated with these projects are not due to money but plan approval complications.

Mr. Haynes explained that there is a list of future projects through FY 2013. Fortunately, when MSHA does its preliminary field investigations for projects, MCDOT is now included, which gives them the chance to make suggestions.

Cherian Eapen said having **Mr. Haynes** on the streetscape project has been very helpful.

Mr. Eapen added that MSHA is currently refusing to allow mid-block crossing on Georgia Avenue, south of Cameron at Fidler Lane (8621 Georgia Avenue development). He said many pedestrians currently cross the mid-block area which provides direct access to Silver Spring Metro. There are also plans to build a restaurant in addition to offices in the area, and without crossing access there is potential for safety problems. This issue goes to the Planning Board next week. **Mr. Eapen** said he is urging MSHA to give the go ahead, since the developer is also on board with funding a mid-block crossing in their design.

MSHA's stated reason for not allowing the crossing is because there are two nearby intersections which people could use to cross; however, the natural tendency is to cross mid-block to Fidler Lane for direct Metro access. **Ms. Brecher** asked if the problem was due to retrofitting the crossing in the future, or is it a question of the developer paying vs. the state. **Mr. Eapen** said that is the issue; however, he has not heard back from the state if they are going to put in a southbound left turn lane on the site and close the median.

Mr. Haynes reported that he filmed the area for 30 minutes, recording 100 uncontrolled mid-block crossers. He also urged MSHA to put in a crossing because of the dangerous speed of traffic. He said the reason MSHA was against it is due to the heavy volume of traffic in the area. **Mr. Duncel** commented that the good news is that the County is breaking new ground regarding pedestrian safety. However, it will be a fight every step of the way because it is on the cutting edge; however, audits provide a good baseline as a rationale for implementing more aggressive safety measures.

Mr. Eapen said because we are in a Central Business District (CBD), MSHA should be more open to making provisions regarding pedestrian safety.

Mr. Wexler said the Committee could write a letter of support and, in addition, he also urged **Mr. Eapen** to contact the chair of the Silver Spring Citizen's Advisory Board Pedestrian and Transportation Committee, **Darian Unger**.

Mr. Eapen said the 8621 Georgia Avenue development goes to the Planning Board next Thursday, 7/21/11 and they will urge them to write a letter in support of the cross walk. **Mr. Wexler** said that since there is opportunity for comment at the Planning Board, there is no need for a formal letter. **Mr. Eapen** said MSHA has not sent a letter to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) regarding the development design, so there is still time for input regarding the crosswalk issue.

Mr. Haynes said that what he has found to be an effective solution is to have the developer's engineering consultant do an analysis showing that a crosswalk will work. **Mr. Eapen** said that the developer does not mind paying to include the crosswalk in the designs, but is not willing if issues with MSHA will cause a slow down in the development process. They are only on board if

everyone is on board. **Mr. Dunckel** said that this is one of the reasons why they are improving the planning process by including pedestrian safety earlier in the design and plan approval process.

Mr. Dunckel discussed other program strategies used for pedestrian safety, such as the Traffic Calming & Intersection program. This program shortens pedestrian crossing distance and slows down traffic using speed humps, bulb outs and speed cameras.

There have been spot improvements on the 16th Street Traffic Circle. **Andrew Bossi**, who was the contractor working on the project, has since left MSHA. However, before leaving he submitted work orders for the project. The County and MSHA have an agreement with the District Dept. of Transportation (DDOT) allowing for additional sidewalk construction. The sidewalks lay the foundation for crosswalk construction, which will be done in the near future.

The Silver Spring Library will have a pedestrian safety study done, focusing on the streetscape at Wayne and Fenton. A report will be provided when the study is complete. There is a meeting in the works with Pedestrian Transportation Safety Advisory Committee or Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, possibly on September 8, or in November.

There was discussion about pedestrian access during intersection construction improvements at East West Highway and Colesville Road, which had all corners of the intersection closed during lunch time hours. **Mr. Haynes** explained that he worked with **Larry Cole** from MSHA and a contractor. They did a walk through of the area, resulting in the contractor making the recommended changes to improve pedestrian access.

Mr. Haynes announced that starting this fall DHCA will begin the next phase of pedestrian improvements, redoing brick paving along Georgia Avenue. **Roger Stanley**, Project Manager for DHCA, is currently obtaining bids for the Georgia Avenue improvements which will be starting in the next 12-18 months. **Mr. Carlson** will follow up with **Mr. Stanley** regarding the project.

Mr. Dunckel reported that for FY12 a little more funding has been allocated for HIAs and related programs. Most cuts have been small except for the Streetscape program, which has been cut in half.

Currently, FY13 funding is in the planning stages. Initially, there was \$5 million; now it is \$2 million. There is a concern about crosswalks fading and the Capital Improvements Program for this fiscal year. Budget needs will be defined by September.

Item 5 – Updates: **Ms Brecher** distributed Commuter Services New Employee brochures which explain commuting options to new hires. She said that **Casey Anderson** from the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) is a bike advocate to the Planning Board. The County received a Bike sharing grant which will be implemented in the Rockville and Shady Grove area. The City of Rockville provided \$200,000 toward the program, and the County is pursuing other funding options. The funding is awarded through the Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program, which will provide access to bike sharing for low income residents for connections to school and work centers.

Ms. Brecher announced that three Montgomery County companies were recognized at the regional COG Employer Recognition Awards, June 27:

- Clean Currents
- BF Saul
- AOTA

Car Free Day will be September 22, 2011. **Mr. Carlson** announced he will send information regarding transit benefits to employers in the Silver Spring area.

Meeting adjourned.

Next meeting date: Sept. 8, 2011

**Silver Spring Transportation Management District Advisory Committee Attendance Sheet
July 14, 2011**

Voting Members (12)			
Name	Affiliation	Present	Absent
Chamber Members (3)			
Arnetta Haines	Social and Scientific Systems		X
Michael Meszaros	Digital Industry, Inc.	X	
Samantha Mazo / Co-chair	Linowes and Blocher LLP		X
Citizens Advisory Board Members (3)			
Edward Furgol	Kemp Mill, Four Corners, East SS		X
Vacant	North & West Sector Plan Area		
Andrew Wexler / Co-chair	CBD Resident	X	
Employers less than 50 employees (3)			
Rukiyat Gilbert	Southern Management Co.	X	
Everton Latty	iDeal Decisions, Inc.	X	
Shannon Crawford	Solid Waste Assoc. of N. America	X	
Employers with 50 or more employees (3)			
G. Michael Price	Discovery Communications	X	
Vacant			
Vacant			
Non-Voting Members (3)			
Sandra Brecher, DOT Transit Services	DOT Director or Designee	X	
Cherian Eapen, M-NCPPC	M-NCPPC	X	
Reemberto Rodriguez	Silver Spring Regional Center		X
Sergeant Thomas Harmon	Montgomery County Police		X
Staff			
Nakengi Byrd	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Jim Carlson	DOT, Commuter Services	X	
Guests			
Jeff Dunkel	MCDOT	X	
William Haynes	MCDOT	X	